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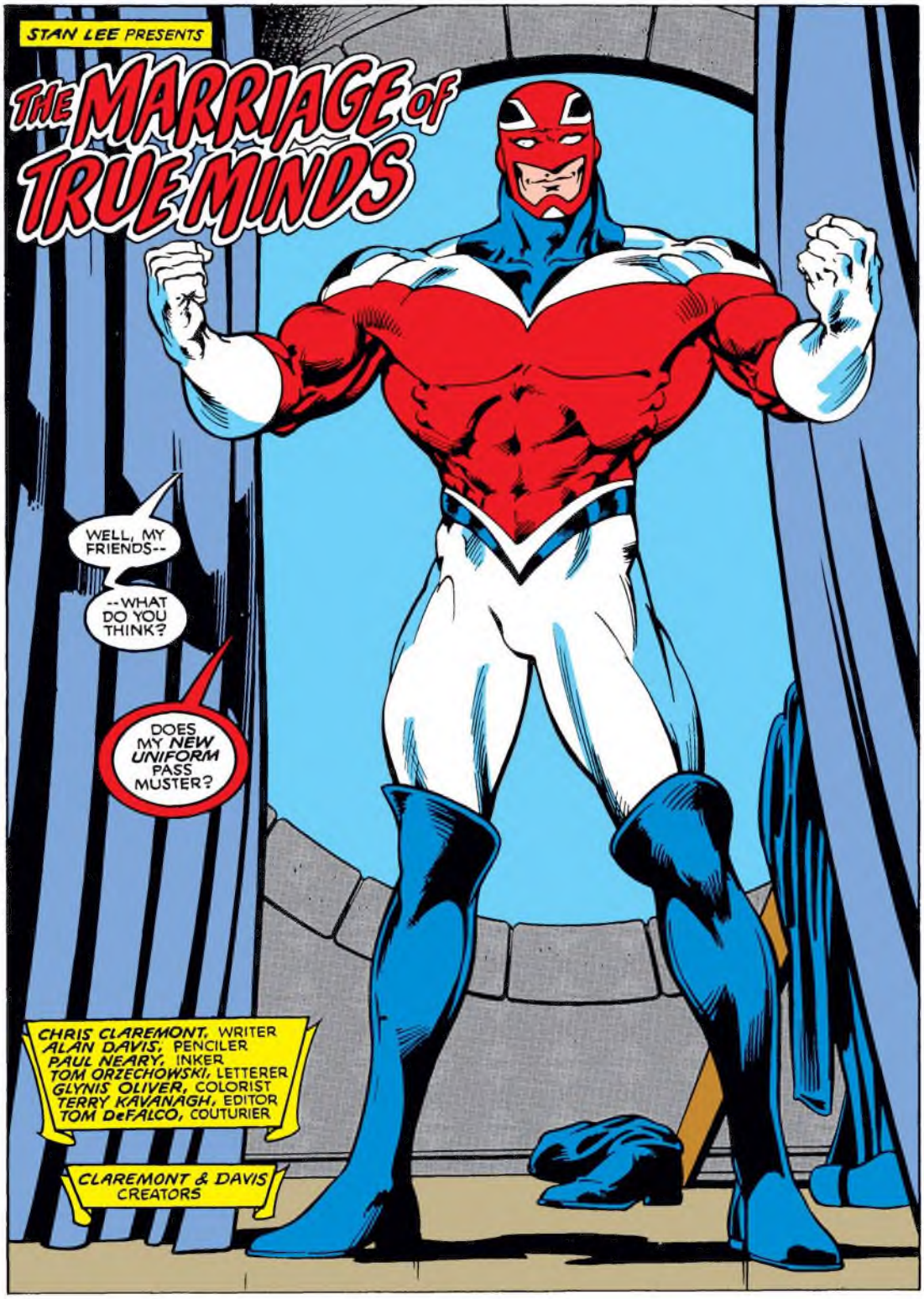
THE CROSS-TIME CAPER™

EXCALIBUR™

ALAN DAVIS / NEARY

WHAT PALACE GUARD?


STAN LEE PRESENTS
THE MARRIAGE OF TRUE MINDS
WELL, MY FRIENDS--
--WHAT DO YOU THINK?
DOES MY NEW UNIFORM PASS MUSTER?
CHRIS CLAREMONT, WRITER
ALAN DAVIS, PENCILER
PAUL NEARY, INKER
TOM ORZECHOWSKI, LETTERER
GLYNIS OLIVER, COLORIST
TERRY KAVANAGH, EDITOR
TOM DeFALCO, COUTURIER
CLAREMONT & DAVIS
CREATORS

Uhmmm
Ah... WELL...
GEE WHIZ, CAP!
...THORNY QUESTION, THAT.
AWFULLY WHITE, Y'KNOW?
DIFFICULT TO BE INCONSPICUOUS AT NIGHT.
PROBABLY PICK UP DIRT LIKE CRAZY.
AND THAT HELMET--!
WHAT'S WRONG WITH HIS HELMET?!
ACTUALLY =heh heh= IN BRITAIN, IT'S THE LAW.
HAVE TO WEAR A HELMET =heh heh= SUPER HEROES SAME AS MOTORCYCLISTS.
Ahem.

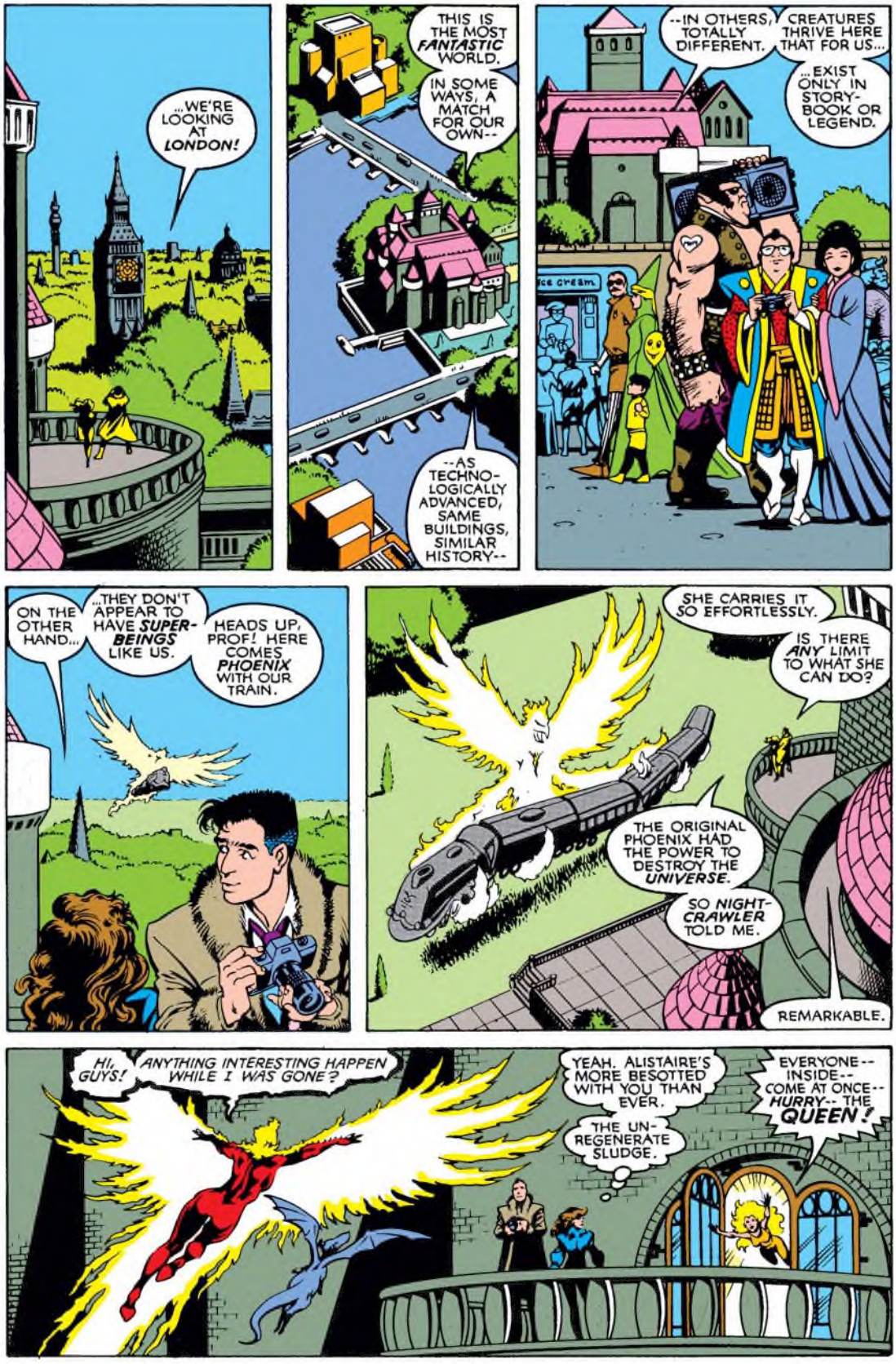
OUR HANDIWORK SUITS YOU WELL, CAPTAIN BRITAIN.
AS YOU DO, IT.
THE MATERIAL IS VIRTUALLY INDESTRUCTIBLE...
...PROOF AGAINST PHYSICAL WEAPONS AND FORCES AS WELL AS ARCANE ONES.

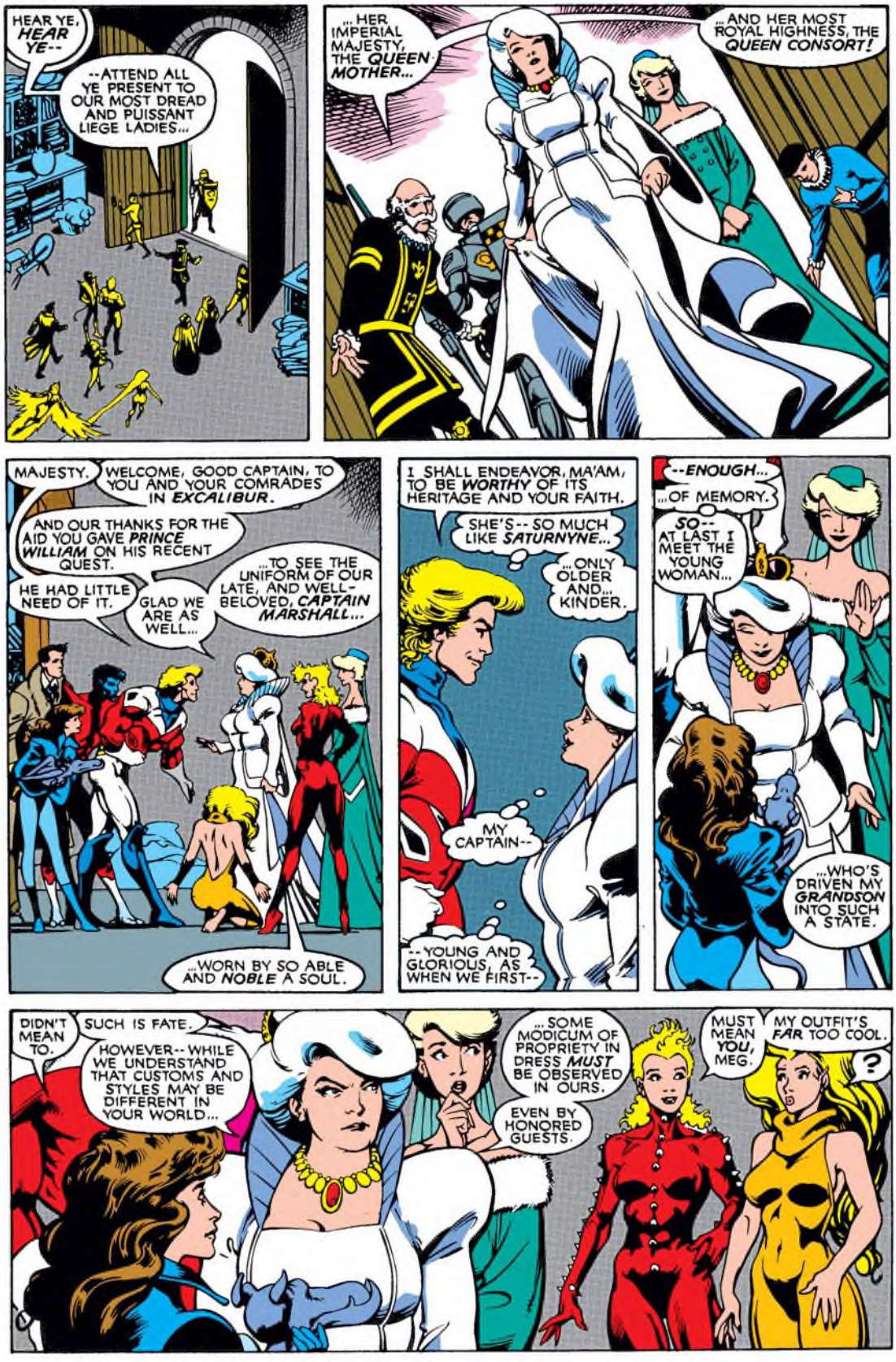
MOREOVER, IT WILL FAR MORE EFFICIENTLY ABSORB AND STORE-- AND FOR A LONGER PERIOD OF TIME-- THE NATIVE MAGICKS OF THESE BRITISH ISLES...
...THAT ARE THE SOURCE OF YOUR GREAT POWER.
THE NATURAL MAGICK OF THE WORLD ITSELF IS SUFFICIENT TO SUSTAIN YOUR LIFE.
THEN-- THAT MUST EXPLAIN YOUR WEAKENING IN NEW YORK, AFTER "INFERNO"...
HOWEVER, YOUR SPECIAL ABILITIES REQUIRE ENGLAND'S UNIQUE ENERGIES.

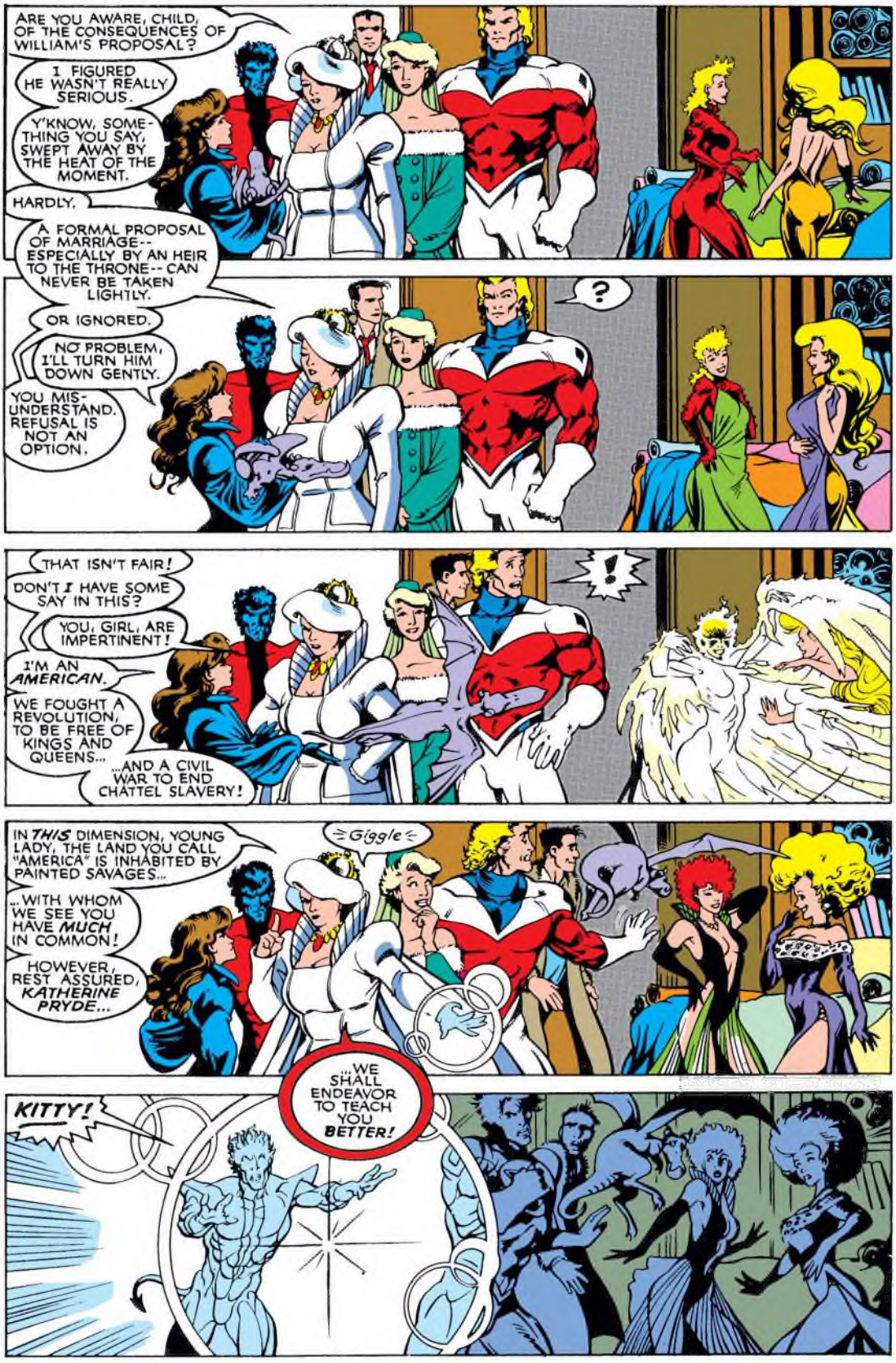
THE SAME ALSO HOLDS TRUE FOR LADY MEGGAN.
JUST LIKE A CLASSIC FAIRY TALE.
WE'RE ALL GIFTED WITH POWERS...
...FOR WHICH WE EACH PAY A PRICE.

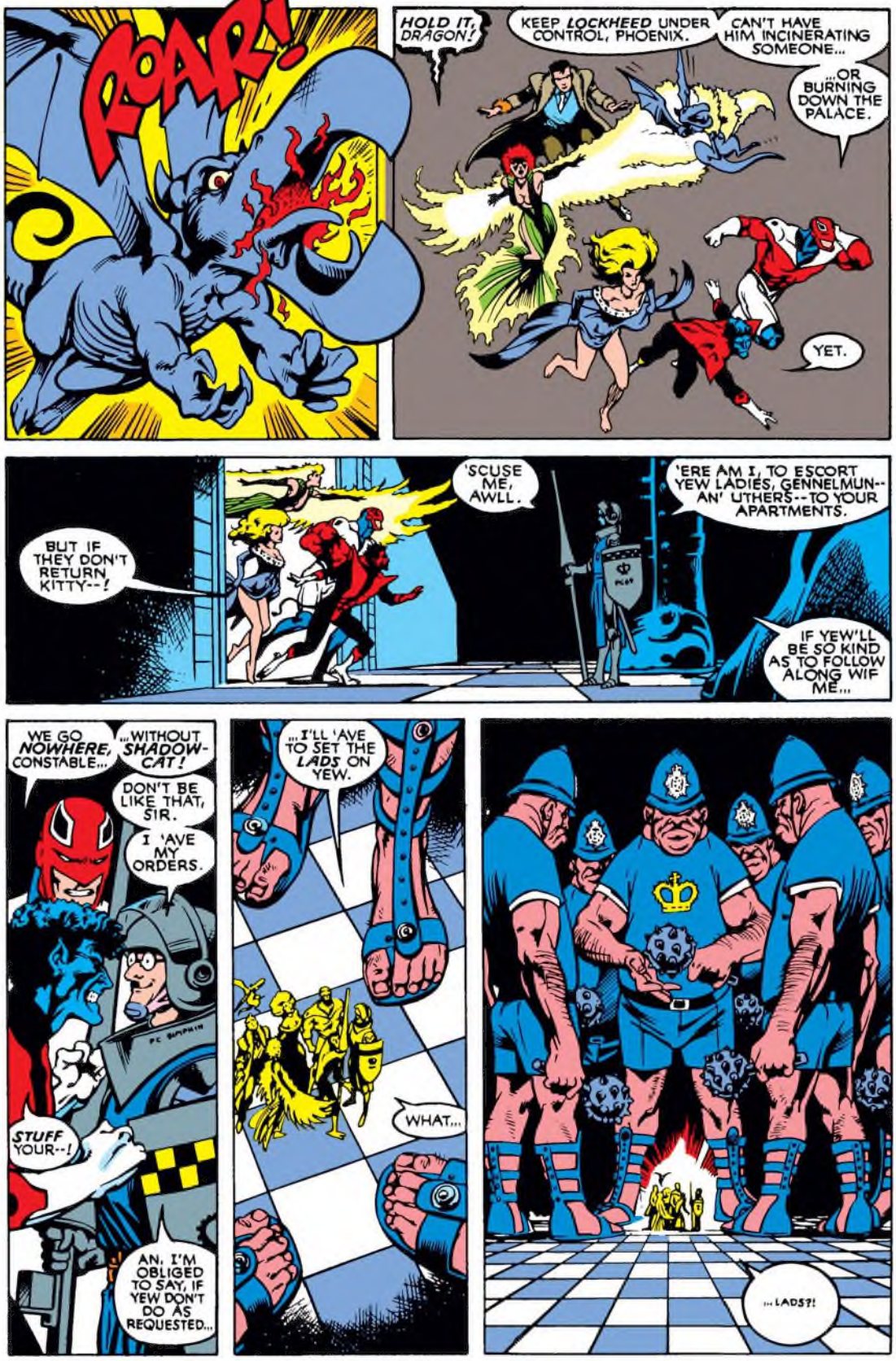
IN MY CASE, I CAN PHASE THROUGH VIRTUALLY ANYTHING.
BUT IT TAKES REAL EFFORT THESE DAYS...
...TO FOCUS MY BODY SOLID.
CLIKA CLIKA CLIKA
THE SLIGHTEST SLIP IN CONCENTRATION...
...AND I REVERT TO BEING A LIVING GHOST.

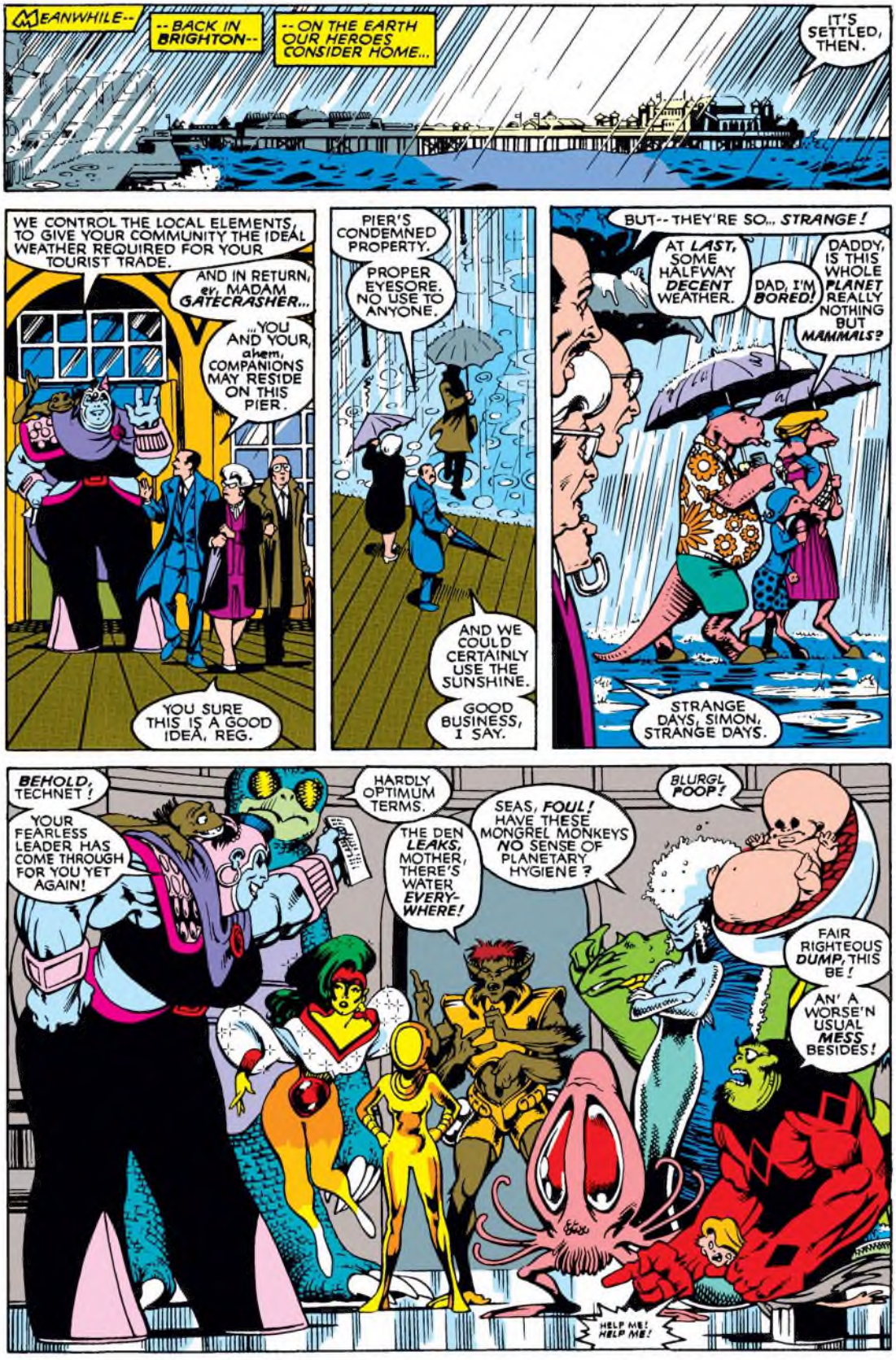
SOME IMPRESSIVE VIEW, huh, PROFESSOR STUART?
AND THEN SOME, SHADOW-CAT.
MY NAME'S KITTY--
--ALISTAIRE.
CLIKA CLIKA CLIKA
HARD TO BELIEVE...

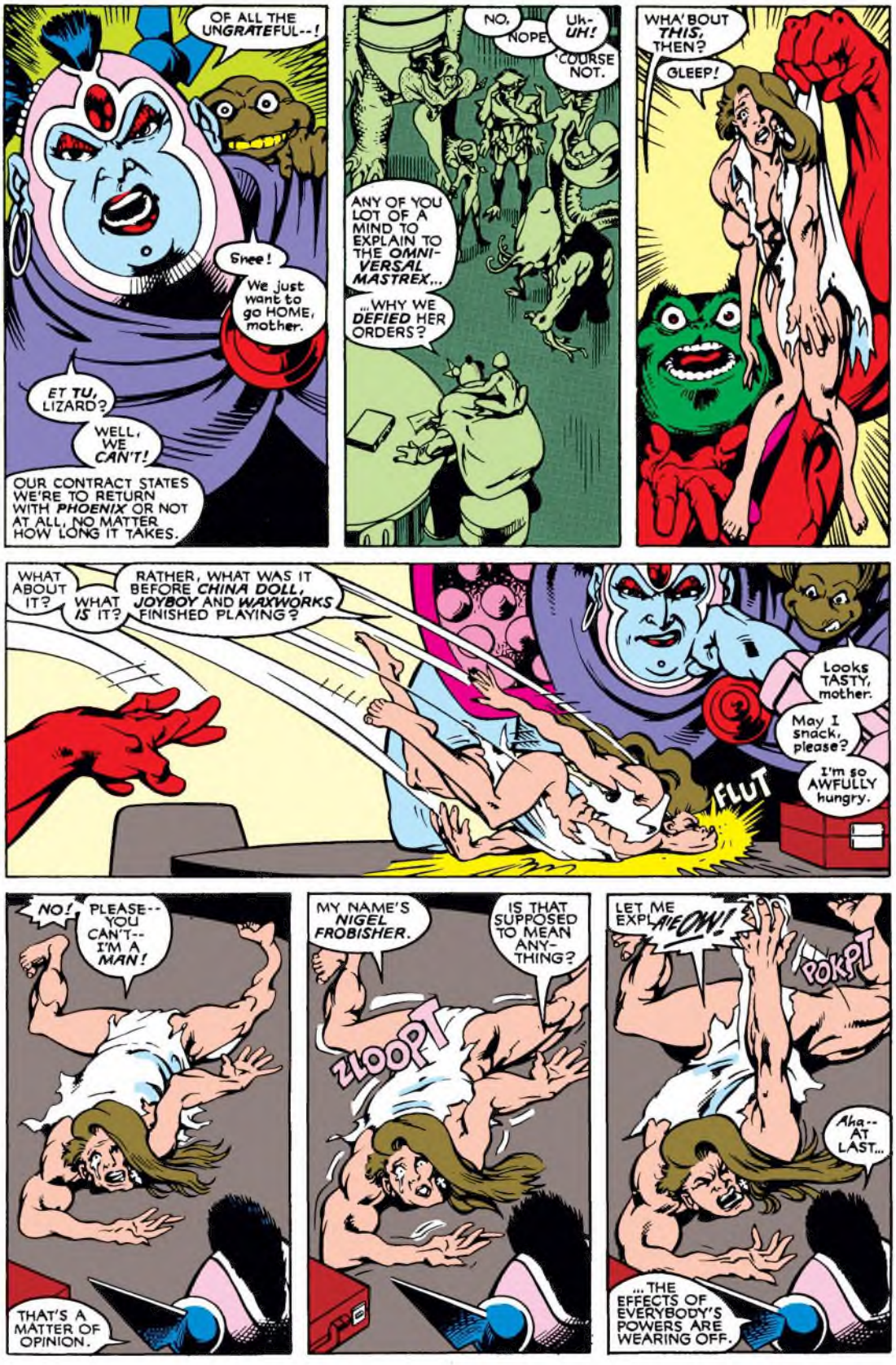

...WE'RE LOOKING AT LONDON!
THIS IS THE MOST FANTASTIC WORLD.
IN SOME WAYS, A MATCH FOR OUR OWN--
--AS TECHNO-LOGICALLY ADVANCED, SAME BUILDINGS, SIMILAR HISTORY--
--IN OTHERS, TOTALLY DIFFERENT.
CREATURES THRIVE HERE THAT FOR US...
...EXIST ONLY IN STORY-BOOK OR LEGEND.
ON THE OTHER HAND...
...THEY DON'T APPEAR TO HAVE SUPER-BEINGS LIKE US.
HEADS UP, PROF! HERE COMES PHOENIX WITH OUR TRAIN.
SHE CARRIES IT SO EFFORTLESSLY.
IS THERE ANY LIMIT TO WHAT SHE CAN DO?
THE ORIGINAL PHOENIX HAD THE POWER TO DESTROY THE UNIVERSE.
SO NIGHT-CRAWLER TOLD ME.
REMARKABLE.
HI, GUYS!
ANYTHING INTERESTING HAPPEN WHILE I WAS GONE?
YEAH. ALISTAIRE'S MORE BESOTTED WITH YOU THAN EVER.
THE UN-REGENERATE SLUDGE.
EVERYONE-- INSIDE-- COME AT ONCE-- HURRY-- THE QUEEN!


HEAR YE, HEAR YE--
--ATTEND ALL YE PRESENT TO OUR MOST DREAD AND PUISSANT LIEGE LADIES...
...HER IMPERIAL MAJESTY, THE QUEEN MOTHER...
...AND HER MOST ROYAL HIGHNESS, THE QUEEN CONSORT!
MAJESTY.
WELCOME, GOOD CAPTAIN, TO YOU AND YOUR COMRADES IN EXCALIBUR.
AND OUR THANKS FOR THE AID YOU GAVE PRINCE WILLIAM ON HIS RECENT QUEST.
HE HAD LITTLE NEED OF IT.
GLAD WE ARE AS WELL...
...TO SEE THE UNIFORM OF OUR LATE, AND WELL-BELOVED, CAPTAIN MARSHALL...
...WORN BY SO ABLE AND NOBLE A SOUL.
I SHALL ENDEAVOR, MA'AM, TO BE WORTHY OF ITS HERITAGE AND YOUR FAITH.
SHE'S-- SO MUCH LIKE SATURNYNE...
...ONLY OLDER AND... KINDER.
MY CAPTAIN--
--YOUNG AND GLORIOUS, AS WHEN WE FIRST--
--ENOUGH...
...OF MEMORY.
SO-- AT LAST I MEET THE YOUNG WOMAN...
...WHO'S DRIVEN MY GRANDSON INTO SUCH A STATE.
DIDN'T MEAN TO.
SUCH IS FATE.
HOWEVER-- WHILE WE UNDERSTAND THAT CUSTOMS AND STYLES MAY BE DIFFERENT IN YOUR WORLD...
...SOME MODICUM OF PROPRIETY IN DRESS MUST BE OBSERVED IN OURS.
EVEN BY HONORED GUESTS.
MUST MEAN YOU, MEG.
MY OUTFIT'S FAR TOO COOL.
?


ARE YOU AWARE, CHILD, OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF WILLIAM'S PROPOSAL?
I FIGURED HE WASN'T REALLY SERIOUS.
Y'KNOW, SOMETHING YOU SAY, SWEPT AWAY BY THE HEAT OF THE MOMENT.
HARDLY.
A FORMAL PROPOSAL OF MARRIAGE--ESPECIALLY BY AN HEIR TO THE THRONE--CAN NEVER BE TAKEN LIGHTLY.
OR IGNORED.
NO PROBLEM, I'LL TURN HIM DOWN GENTLY.
YOU MISUNDERSTAND. REFUSAL IS NOT AN OPTION.
?
THAT ISN'T FAIR!
DON'T I HAVE SOME SAY IN THIS?
YOU, GIRL, ARE IMPERTINENT!
I'M AN AMERICAN.
WE FOUGHT A REVOLUTION, TO BE FREE OF KINGS AND QUEENS...
...AND A CIVIL WAR TO END CHATTEL SLAVERY!
!
IN THIS DIMENSION, YOUNG LADY, THE LAND YOU CALL "AMERICA" IS INHABITED BY PAINTED SAVAGES...
...WITH WHOM WE SEE YOU HAVE MUCH IN COMMON!
HOWEVER, REST ASSURED, KATHERINE PRYDE...
=Giggle=
...WE SHALL ENDEAVOR TO TEACH YOU BETTER!
KITTY!


ROAR!
HOLD IT, DRAGON!
KEEP LOCKHEED UNDER CONTROL, PHOENIX.
CAN'T HAVE HIM INCINERATING SOMEONE...
...OR BURNING DOWN THE PALACE.
YET.
BUT IF THEY DON'T RETURN KITTY--!
'SCUSE ME, AWLL.
'ERE AM I, TO ESCORT YEW LADIES, GENNELMUN-- AN' UTHERS--TO YOUR APARTMENTS.
IF YEW'LL BE SO KIND AS TO FOLLOW ALONG WIF ME...
WE GO NOWHERE, CONSTABLE...
...WITHOUT SHADOW-CAT!
DON'T BE LIKE THAT, SIR.
I 'AVE MY ORDERS.
STUFF YOUR--!
AN, I'M OBLIGED TO SAY, IF YEW DON'T DO AS REQUESTED...
...I'LL 'AVE TO SET THE LADS ON YEW.
WHAT...
...LADS?!


MEANWHILE--
-- BACK IN BRIGHTON--
-- ON THE EARTH OUR HEROES CONSIDER HOME...
IT'S SETTLED, THEN.
WE CONTROL THE LOCAL ELEMENTS, TO GIVE YOUR COMMUNITY THE IDEAL WEATHER REQUIRED FOR YOUR TOURIST TRADE.
AND IN RETURN, er, MADAM GATECRASHER...
...YOU AND YOUR, ahem, COMPANIONS MAY RESIDE ON THIS PIER.
YOU SURE THIS IS A GOOD IDEA, REG.
PIER'S CONDEMNED PROPERTY.
PROPER EYESORE. NO USE TO ANYONE.
AND WE COULD CERTAINLY USE THE SUNSHINE.
GOOD BUSINESS, I SAY.
BUT-- THEY'RE SO... STRANGE!
AT LAST, SOME HALFWAY DECENT WEATHER.
DAD, I'M BORED!
DADDY, IS THIS WHOLE PLANET REALLY NOTHING BUT MAMMALS?
STRANGE DAYS, SIMON, STRANGE DAYS.
BEHOLD, TECHNET!
YOUR FEARLESS LEADER HAS COME THROUGH FOR YOU YET AGAIN!
HARDLY OPTIMUM TERMS.
THE DEN LEAKS, MOTHER, THERE'S WATER EVERY-WHERE!
SEAS, FOUL! HAVE THESE MONGREL MONKEYS NO SENSE OF PLANETARY HYGIENE?
BLURGL POOP!
FAIR RIGHTEOUS DUMP, THIS BE!
AN' A WORSE'N USUAL MESS BESIDES!
HELP ME! HELP ME!


OF ALL THE UNGRATEFUL--!
Shee!
We just want to go HOME, mother.
ET TU, LIZARD?
WELL, WE CAN'T!
OUR CONTRACT STATES WE'RE TO RETURN WITH PHOENIX OR NOT AT ALL, NO MATTER HOW LONG IT TAKES.
NO.
NOPE.
Uh-UH!
'COURSE NOT.
ANY OF YOU LOT OF A MIND TO EXPLAIN TO THE OMNI-VERSAL MASTREX...
...WHY WE DEFIED HER ORDERS?
WHA' BOUT THIS, THEN?
GLEEP!
WHAT ABOUT IT?
WHAT IS IT?
RATHER, WHAT WAS IT BEFORE CHINA DOLL, JOYBOY AND WAXWORKS FINISHED PLAYING?
Looks TASTY, mother.
May I snack, please?
I'm so AWFULLY hungry.
FLUT
NO!
PLEASE-- YOU CAN'T-- I'M A MAN!
THAT'S A MATTER OF OPINION.
MY NAME'S NIGEL FROBISHER.
IS THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN ANY-THING?
ZLOOPT
LET ME EXPLAIN!
AIEOW!
POKPT
Aha-- AT LAST...
...THE EFFECTS OF EVERYBODY'S POWERS ARE WEARING OFF.

FAIR MOVES.
AYAH. BUT I'VE HEARD BETTER SCREAMS.
DEAR MR. FROBISHER, THIS COULD TAKE A WHILE.
I DO HOPE YOU'LL PARDON THE PRESUMPTION OF MY OPENING YOUR CASE.
SNAP
Snee-- any secrets, mo--!
DON'T SAY THAT WORD, YAP, ON PERIL OF YOUR...

GATECRASHER-- LOOK!
HOW DARE YOU TRIFLE SO WITH MY PERSON?!

HOW DARE YOU, TERRAN, PRESUME TO ADOPT THE FORM AND MANNER OF THE OMNIVERSAL MASTREX HERSELF--
--OPAL LUNA SATURNYNE?!

BUT I DIDN'T-- I MEAN, THAT WASN'T-- IT'S JOYBOY'S FAULT--PULLED THE IMAGE FROM MY DREAMS--
--OF MY BOSS COURTNEY ROSS, OF FRASER'S BANK--
--oh LORD, IF SHE EVER FINDS OUT--

--I'M HERE ON HER INSTRUCTIONS--
--TO ENGAGE YOUR SERVICES--
--TO RESCUE JAMES BRADDOCK, THE ELDER BROTHER OF A MAJOR CLIENT, BRIAN BRADDOCK...
...UNDER SENTENCE OF DEATH FROM AN AFRICAN TYRANT, JOSHUA N'DINGI, DOC CROC!
RCX 9947/A1
RCX

DEAR BOY-- SWEET LAD-- WHY DIDN'T YOU SAY SO?
MY STARS, BRIAN BRADDOCK IS ONE OF OUR DEAREST FRIENDS.
No food?
NOT A BITE, GREEDY-GUTS. THIS FINE GENTLEMEN HAS BROUGHT US OUR FIRST COMMISSION.
REST ASSURED, MR. FROBISHER, JAMES BRADDOCK IS AS GOOD AS FREE.
ASSUMING, OF COURSE, WE CAN ARRIVE AT AN APPROPRIATE FEE.

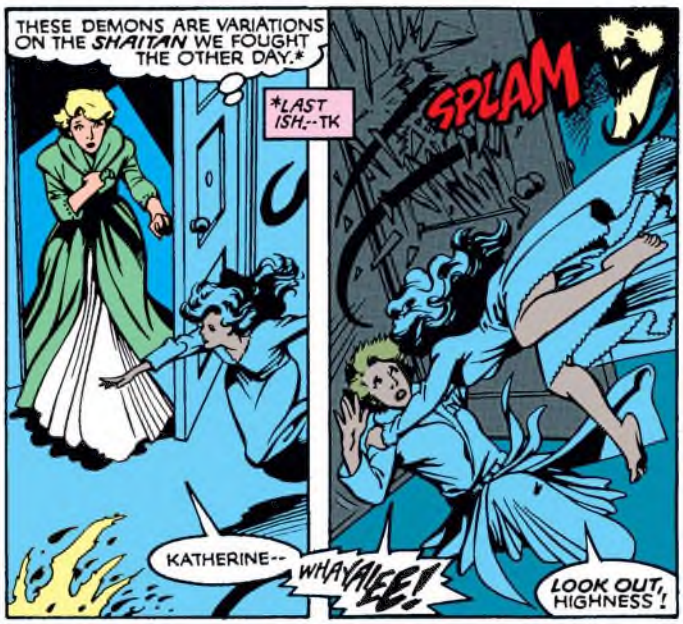
KRACHK!

CRACK!

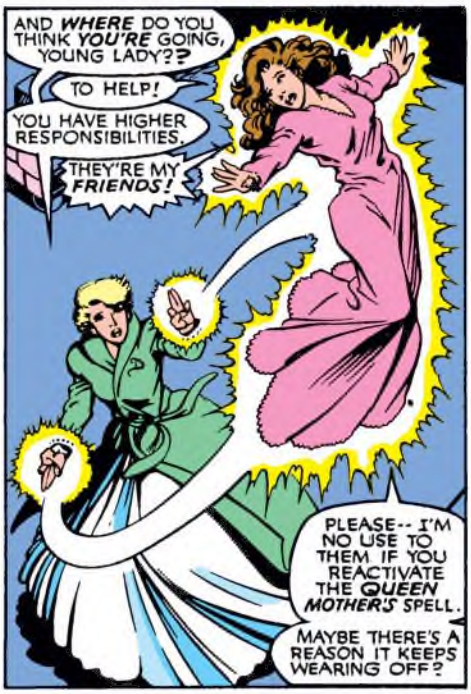
BOOM!
HELP HELP HELP HELP HELP

MORE POWER I USE--
--HARDER I HIT 'EM--
--WORSE THINGS GET!
OUT OF HERE, GIRL--
--WHILE YOU'RE STILL ABLE!
CAPTAIN-- BEHIND YOU!
ONLY ONE CREATURE HOLDING ME NOW--

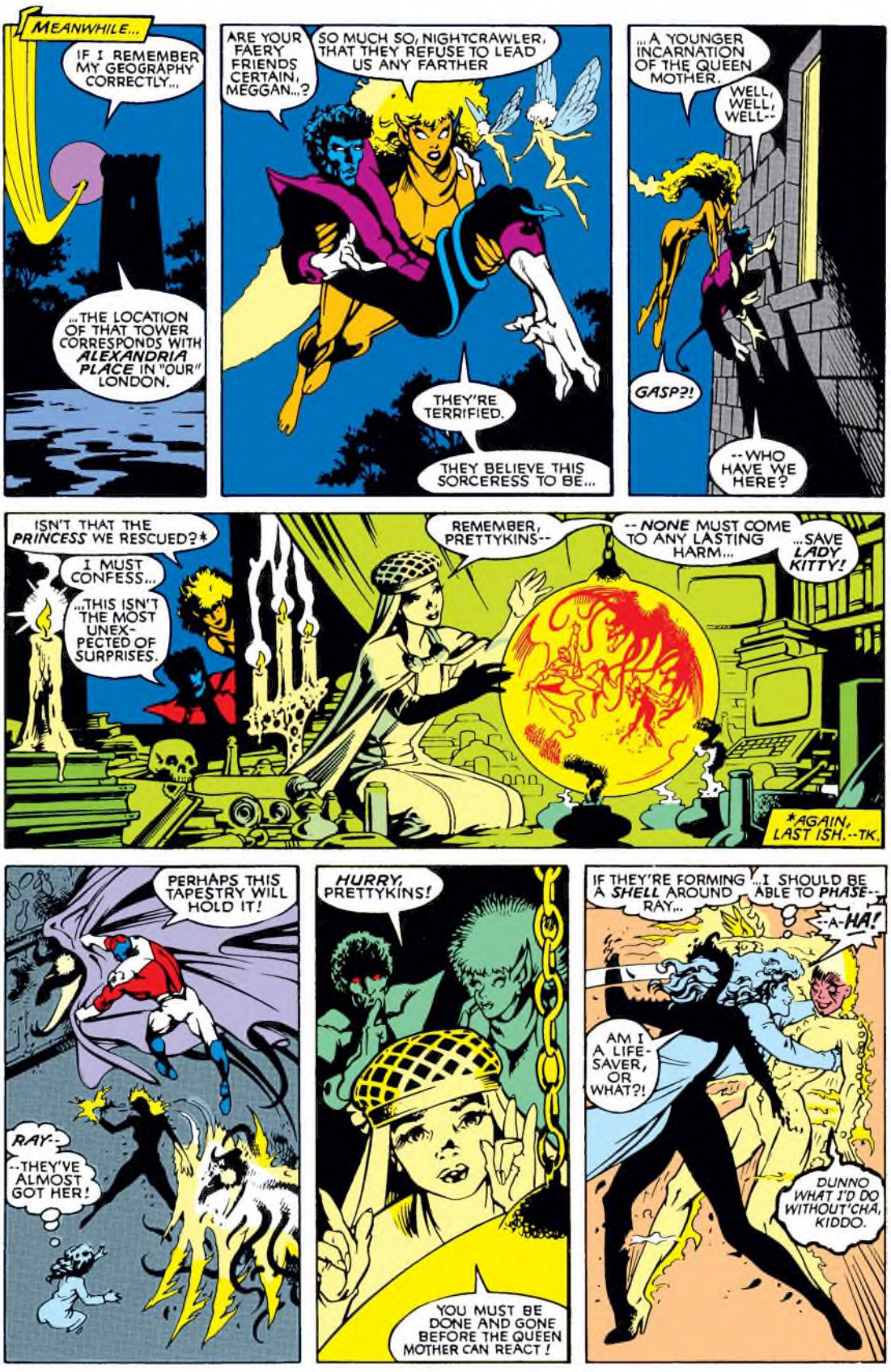
--PERHAPS I CAN--
--WAYTAGO!
PHASING ON ALL CYLINDERS.
NEVER THOUGHT I'D EVER BE SO HAPPY TO FIND MYSELF A "GHOST" AGAIN.

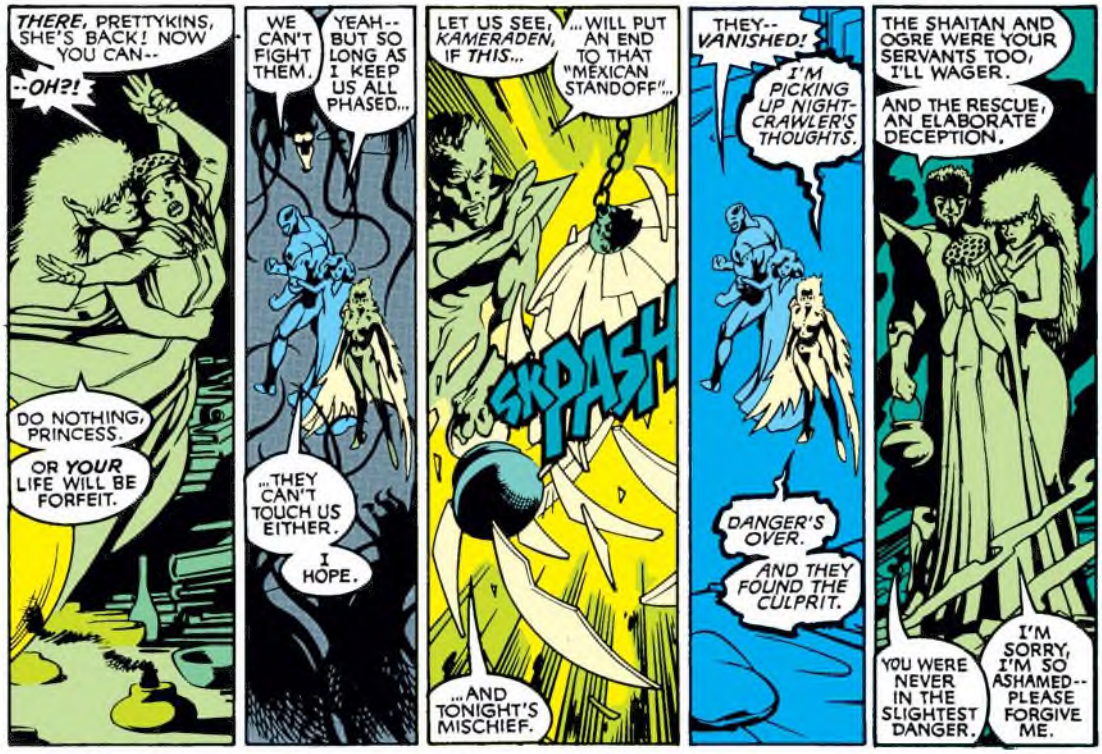

THESE DEMONS ARE VARIATIONS ON THE SHAITAN WE FOUGHT THE OTHER DAY.*
*LAST ISH.--TK
SPLAM
KATHERINE--
WHAYALEE!
LOOK OUT, HIGHNESS!

STAY DOWN HERE, OUT OF HARM'S WAY, IT'S ME AN' EXCALIBUR THEY SEEM TO BE AFTER.
MAYBE YOU BETTER CALL SOME CAVALRY, THOUGH...
...JUST IN CASE.
Oh MY oh MY oh MY

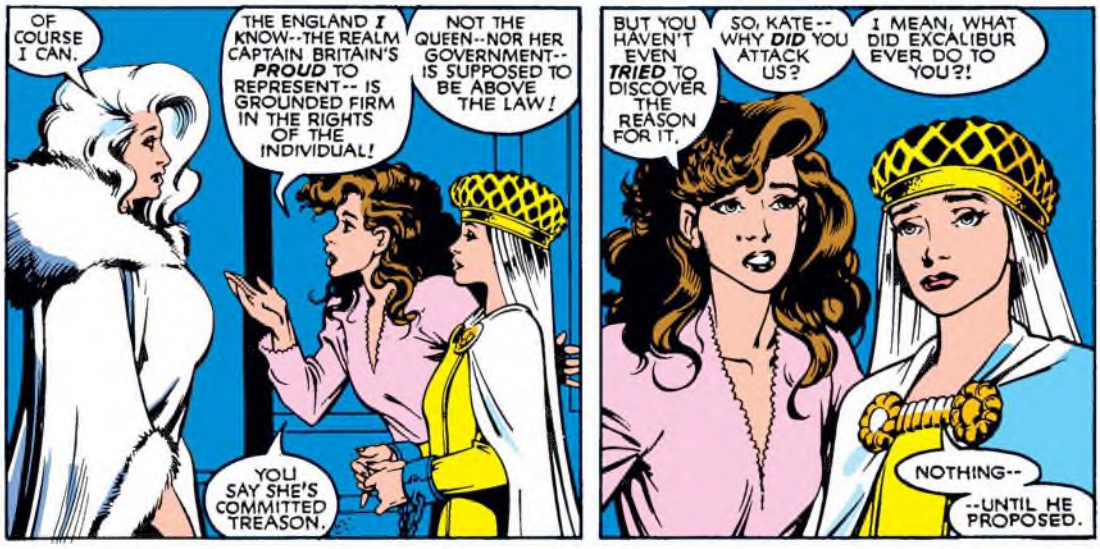

AND WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING, YOUNG LADY??
TO HELP!
YOU HAVE HIGHER RESPONSIBILITIES.
THEY'RE MY FRIENDS!
PLEASE-- I'M NO USE TO THEM IF YOU REACTIVATE THE QUEEN MOTHER'S SPELL.
MAYBE THERE'S A REASON IT KEEPS WEARING OFF?

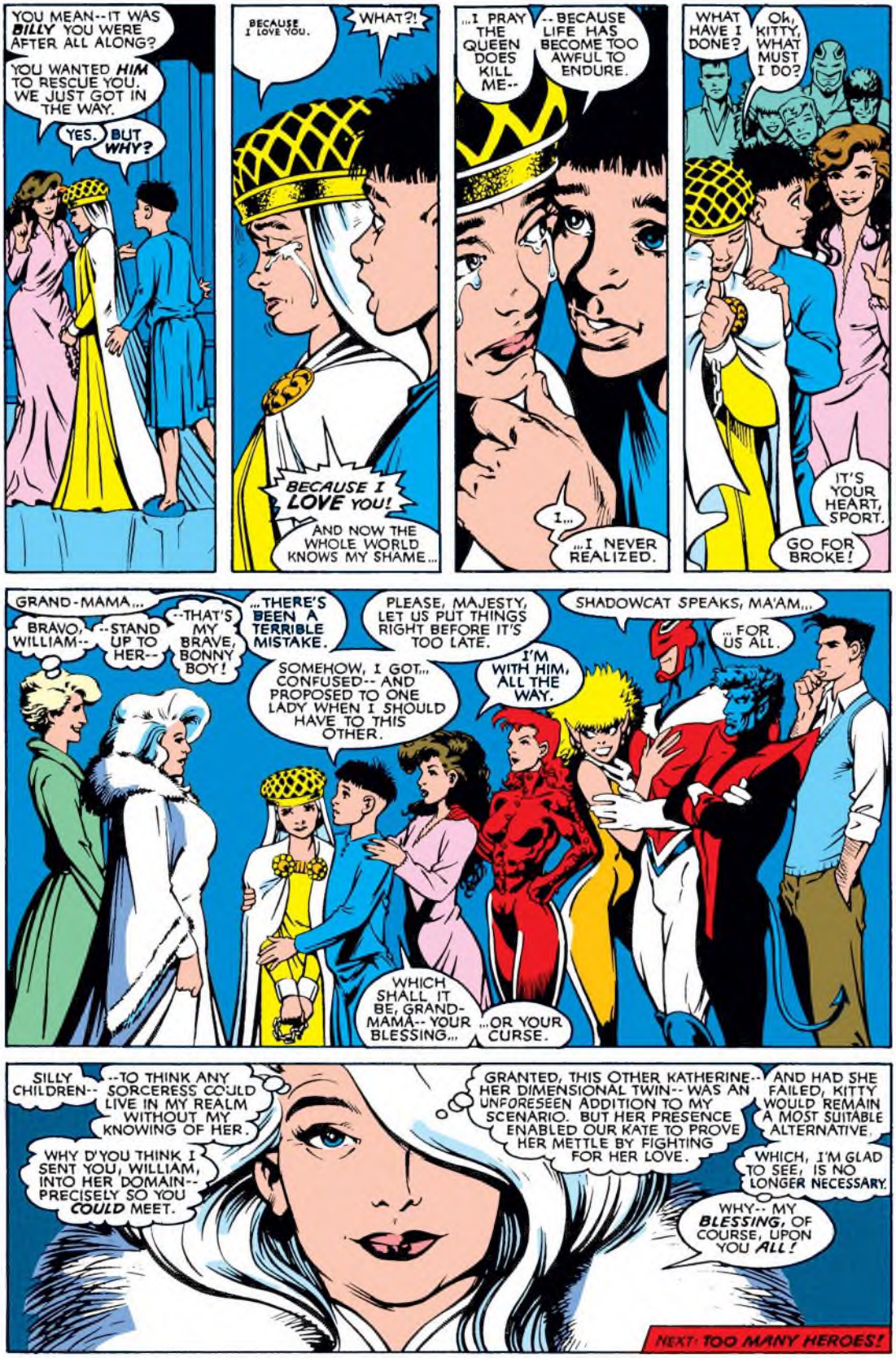
MAYBE FOR ONCE IN HER LIFE, THAT OLD BAT MADE A MISTAKE.
MAYBE SHADOWCAT IS THE PERSON I'M MEANT TO BE...
...NOT PRINCESS KITTY.
FOR ALL OUR SAKES...
...I HOPE SO.


MEANWHILE...
IF I REMEMBER MY GEOGRAPHY CORRECTLY...
...THE LOCATION OF THAT TOWER CORRESPONDS WITH ALEXANDRIA PLACE IN "OUR" LONDON.
ARE YOUR FAERY FRIENDS CERTAIN, MEGGAN...?
SO MUCH SO, NIGHTCRAWLER, THAT THEY REFUSE TO LEAD US ANY FARTHER
THEY'RE TERRIFIED.
THEY BELIEVE THIS SORCERESS TO BE...
...A YOUNGER INCARNATION OF THE QUEEN MOTHER.
WELL, WELL, WELL--
GASP?!
--WHO HAVE WE HERE?
ISN'T THAT THE PRINCESS WE RESCUED?*
I MUST CONFESS...
...THIS ISN'T THE MOST UNEXPECTED OF SURPRISES.
REMEMBER, PRETTYKINS--
--NONE MUST COME TO ANY LASTING HARM...
...SAVE LADY KITTY!
*AGAIN, LAST ISH.--TK.
PERHAPS THIS TAPESTRY WILL HOLD IT!
RAY--
--THEY'VE ALMOST GOT HER!
HURRY, PRETTYKINS!
YOU MUST BE DONE AND GONE BEFORE THE QUEEN MOTHER CAN REACT!
IF THEY'RE FORMING A SHELL AROUND RAY...
...I SHOULD BE ABLE TO PHASE--
--A-HA!
AM I A LIFE-SAVER, OR WHAT?!
DUNNO WHAT I'D DO WITHOUT'CHA, KIDDO.


THERE, PRETTYKINS, SHE'S BACK! NOW YOU CAN--
--OH?!
DO NOTHING, PRINCESS.
OR YOUR LIFE WILL BE FORFEIT.
WE CAN'T FIGHT THEM.
YEAH-- BUT SO LONG AS I KEEP US ALL PHASED...
...THEY CAN'T TOUCH US EITHER.
I HOPE.
LET US SEE, KAMERADEN, IF THIS...
...WILL PUT AN END TO THAT "MEXICAN STANDOFF"...
SKPASH
...AND TONIGHT'S MISCHIEF.
THEY-- VANISHED!
I'M PICKING UP NIGHT-CRAWLER'S THOUGHTS.
DANGER'S OVER.
AND THEY FOUND THE CULPRIT.
THE SHAITAN AND OGRE WERE YOUR SERVANTS TOO, I'LL WAGER.
AND THE RESCUE, AN ELABORATE DECEPTION.
YOU WERE NEVER IN THE SLIGHTEST DANGER.
I'M SORRY, I'M SO ASHAMED-- PLEASE FORGIVE ME.

"I'M AFRAID, CHILD, IT ISN'T ME YOU'LL HAVE TO ANSWER TO."
YOURS, KATE, IS A POWER NOT SEEN IN THIS LAND IN AN AGE.
HOW TRAGIC IT HAD TO BE REVEALED THROUGH AN ACT OF HIGH TREASON.
SAME NAME AS ME.
AND NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT...
...WE DO SORT OF LOOK ALIKE.
FOR WHICH THERE IS BUT ONE-- ULTIMATE-- SENTENCE.
WAITAMINNIT!
KITTY, FOR MERCY'S SAKE, DON'T MAKE HER MAD AT US!
YOU CAN'T JUST SNAP YOUR FINGERS AND SAY SO AND SO'S GUILTY, OFF WITH HER HEAD!


OF COURSE I CAN.
THE ENGLAND I KNOW--THE REALM CAPTAIN BRITAIN'S PROUD TO REPRESENT-- IS GROUNDED FIRM IN THE RIGHTS OF THE INDIVIDUAL!
NOT THE QUEEN--NOR HER GOVERNMENT-- IS SUPPOSED TO BE ABOVE THE LAW!
YOU SAY SHE'S COMMITTED TREASON.
BUT YOU HAVEN'T EVEN TRIED TO DISCOVER THE REASON FOR IT.
SO, KATE-- WHY DID YOU ATTACK US?
I MEAN, WHAT DID EXCALIBUR EVER DO TO YOU?!
NOTHING--
--UNTIL HE PROPOSED.


YOU MEAN--IT WAS BILLY YOU WERE AFTER ALL ALONG?
YOU WANTED HIM TO RESCUE YOU. WE JUST GOT IN THE WAY.
YES. BUT WHY?
BECAUSE I LOVE YOU.
WHAT?!
BECAUSE I LOVE YOU!
AND NOW THE WHOLE WORLD KNOWS MY SHAME...
...I PRAY THE QUEEN DOES KILL ME--
--BECAUSE LIFE HAS BECOME TOO AWFUL TO ENDURE.
I...
...I NEVER REALIZED.
WHAT HAVE I DONE?
OH, KITTY, WHAT MUST I DO?
IT'S YOUR HEART, SPORT.
GO FOR BROKE!
GRAND-MAMA...
BRAVO, WILLIAM--
--STAND UP TO HER--
--THAT'S MY BRAVE, BONNY BOY!
...THERE'S BEEN A TERRIBLE MISTAKE.
SOMEHOW, I GOT... CONFUSED-- AND PROPOSED TO ONE LADY WHEN I SHOULD HAVE TO THIS OTHER.
PLEASE, MAJESTY, LET US PUT THINGS RIGHT BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE.
I'M WITH HIM, ALL THE WAY.
SHADOWCAT SPEAKS, MA'AM...
...FOR US ALL.
WHICH SHALL IT BE, GRAND-MAMA-- YOUR BLESSING...
...OR YOUR CURSE.
SILLY CHILDREN--
--TO THINK ANY SORCERESS COULD LIVE IN MY REALM WITHOUT MY KNOWING OF HER.
WHY D'YOU THINK I SENT YOU, WILLIAM, INTO HER DOMAIN-- PRECISELY SO YOU COULD MEET.
GRANTED, THIS OTHER KATHERINE-- HER DIMENSIONAL TWIN-- WAS AN UNFORESEEN ADDITION TO MY SCENARIO. BUT HER PRESENCE ENABLED OUR KATE TO PROVE HER METTLE BY FIGHTING FOR HER LOVE.
AND HAD SHE FAILED, KITTY WOULD REMAIN A MOST SUITABLE ALTERNATIVE.
WHICH, I'M GLAD TO SEE, IS NO LONGER NECESSARY.
WHY-- MY BLESSING, OF COURSE, UPON YOU ALL!
NEXT: TOO MANY HEROES!